

MASONRY IN MANITOBA

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THEIR EYES ARE UPON YOU

The principles of Freemasonry should be the principles of every reader of these words because you have dedicated yourself by sacred vows to do certain things and follow a definite rule of conduct.

Outside the lodge room the eyes of the world, so to speak, are upon you, not necessarily from the standpoint of critical appraisal but simply because your close friends, your neighbours, and your fellow-workers know you to be a member of a Masonic Lodge.

There is no middle course, no neutral zone in Freemasonry. It is positive and it should be dynamic. Each individual brother is an example for someone, some time, some place and if you follow the principles laid down in the ceremonies you took part in then there can be no doubt as to the kind of influence you will exert in your immediate environment.

It is unquestionable that the conception of people outside the circle of the Craft is definitely formed from their experience and knowledge of the men whom they know to be members of the local lodge.

The knowledge that such is the case should be a constant challenge to every brother because the goal of brotherhood will never be attained if we have members who contentedly sit back with smug detachment and make no personal contribution to the aims and purposes of Freemasonry.

The man who crossed the threshold of Freemasonry for the first time in your lodge a few weeks ago may be an apprentice today but he must be recognized as the Master Mason of tomorrow. We do not mean he will have the degree conferred upon him—that is only the ceremonial part of Masonry—becoming a Master Mason means much more than reaching the official rank.

How often do we look upon a young candidate as a future leader in his lodge and in the wider sphere of Grand Lodge? Every brother who has been honored by being elected as Grand Master in any jurisdiction at one time in his life came to the door of a lodge, poor and penniless and in due course was privileged to be enrolled as an Entered Apprentice. Few of us forget the feeling of the occasion when we were initiated.

This then is the proper starting point from which we make a start to create a Freemason. On the first introduction the pliable material should be prepared in order that the superstructure of

tomorrow may withstand all the onslaughts of other forces. Those of us who have been elected to places of authority have a responsibility that cannot be ignored.

Yes, we are conscious of our past failures and thinking back we realize we could have done something just a little better—but there is no second chance once the candidate has been left to grope for himself.

Outside the lodge curious eyes watch what the Masonic brethren do and in the ranks of the Craft there are other eyes—more critical than those outside and they look for something which alas in too many instances is non-existent.

Think this thing over and judge for yourself what is wanted in your lodge to stir the members to a greater interest in what is real Freemasonry.

THE TROWEL

The consummation of Speculative Masonry is reached when a brother is raised to the Sublime Degree of a M.M. In the lodges using York Rite work we are told that all the implements of Masonry belong to this degree but a special significance is attached to the trowel.

The cement which unites a building into one common mass is spread by this useful tool. The Masonic application tells us that it also spreads the cement of Brotherly Love binding us into one sacred band, knit together for mutual support thus proclaiming the fundamental principle of true Freemasonry.

We must understand and realize that the brotherhood of our Craft extends far beyond the restricted limits of kindred, locality, race or country. Today, as was the case a hundred years ago, we are taught that wherever we may travel we may expect to find in a Freemason, a friend—a brother.

Common sense tells us that in the realm of operative Masonry a wall can have no stability or coherence without the application of cement. By the same token we must utilize the cement of Brotherly Love if we would desire to hold the social fabric together, firm and secure. In the Volume of the Sacred Law we are told that the grace of Brotherly Love is the highest virtue, “the end of the commandment is Charity, out of a good heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

The new commandment is a grace of the heart, continually manifesting itself in the words and actions of life, and governing a man's whole conduct towards those who he is, variously, brought in contact, and especially finding expression in deeds of kindness towards his close associates in shop, in office, in the lodge and particularly in the domestic circle.

The trowel symbolizes the great law of love in its perfect fulness, the law which every good man strives to obey and which prompts him to be a helpful neighbour and a genuine friend.

When, if ever, all the social wants of mankind are assumed by a government agency and there is no need for private relief and personal compassion, Brotherly Love will still remain because the law of love will still unite multitudes of peoples of every tongue in unbroken harmony.

This may be visionary still it is the grand design of Masonry and we have resolved that each man belonging to the Craft shall use his own trowel to spread the cement with one end in view—Brotherly Love as the centre.

FROM OVERSEAS

A Joint Conference of the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland was held in London on Wednesday, 29th June last. The principal subject under discussion was "The Aims and Relationships of the Craft" and it resulted in the preparation and release of the following statement which was issued simultaneously by all three Grand Lodges.

"In August 1938, the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland each agreed upon and issued a statement identical in terms except that the name of the issuing Grand Lodge appeared throughout. Paragraph 7 of this statement, which is entitled *Aims and Relationships of the Craft*, is in the following terms:

"The Grand Lodge has always consistently refused to express any opinion on questions of foreign and domestic state policy either at home or abroad, and it will not allow its name to be associated with any action, however humanitarian it may appear to be which infringes its unalterable policy of standing aloof from every question affecting the relations between one Government and another, or between political parties, or questions as to rival theories of government."

"The Grand Lodge of England has been asked if it still stands by this declaration, particularly in regard to paragraph 7. The Grand Lodge of England replied that it stood by every word of the declaration, and has since asked for the opinion of the Grand Lodges of Ireland and Scotland. A conference has been held between the three Grand Lodges, and all unhesitatingly reaffirm the statement that was pronounced in 1938; nothing in present-day affairs has been found that could cause them to recede from that attitude.

"If Freemasonry once deviated from its course by expressing an opinion on political or theological questions, it would be called upon not only publicly to approve or denounce any movement which might arise in the future, but would sow the seeds of discord among its own members.

"The Three Grand Lodges are convinced that it is only by rigid adherence to this policy that Freemasonry has survived the constantly changing doctrines of the outside world, and are

compelled to place on record their complete disapproval of any action which may tend to permit the slightest departure from the basic principles of Freemasonry. They are strongly of the opinion that if any of the three Grand Lodges does so, it cannot maintain a claim to be following the ancient Landmarks of the Order, and must ultimately face disintegration."

This pronouncement should carry a note of warning to some of our impatient members who from time to time seek to make changes in order to follow the path laid out by other organizations.

We have remarked on a previous occasion that Freemasonry is different, different from any other fraternal, political or community activity and it is this fact of being different that gives to the Craft the enduring qualities that have carried it through the changing years.

What a task lies ahead of the leaders in our lodges and what a field there is in which to do our work.

THE MORAL LAW

We are accustomed to hear speakers in our lodges making reference to "Masonic Principles" and a copy of the declaration prepared by Grand Lodge for the information of members and petitioners is doubtless among your papers. Let us contemplate one of our fundamental principles for a few moments; The Authority of Order and Laws.

The working tools of the operative Mason have been used by speculative Masonry to symbolize a transfer of the finality of natural law to the realm of human behavior. Just as the Square was required by the operative Mason to fit the joints with accuracy, so it teaches us to apply the unerring principles of moral science to our lives to see that our conduct coincides with the dictates of Divine Justice. Just as the Plumbline enabled the operative Mason to erect a temporal building with perfection, so it suggests the unerring demand that we pursue truth without yielding at all to adversity or prosperity.

We live in a time when it is popular to regard law, especially the moral law, as relative. Conditions and circumstances are permitted to alter conduct. We excuse misdemeanors on the basis of expediency. We say nothing is too good for one who has suffered deprivation. Then we wonder at the lawlessness rampant in the world.

If there is one thing Masonry has to teach, it is the inexorable moral law. What a man sows he must reap. All the symbols and jewels of Freemasonry proclaim and illustrate the finality of moral law in the construction of character. A true Mason obeys the laws of his country. He changes it by due process. He also governs his conduct by moral rule. He is no more a moral anarchist than he is a political anarchist. He has something to

offer a confused world. Who then is better prepared to meet both danger and opportunity than a Mason who works at what he believes.

But he must work at it. Just as the traditions, forms and symbols of Masonry are dependent upon principles for their vitality, so the principles of Masonry are dependent on individual Masons for their revealing. Goethe once said that great ideas cannot truly be spoken, they have to be lived.

Masons have a tremendous inheritance. It can be invested or ignored. It must be invested daily for no man can invest in tomorrow except as he does it today. It must also be invested in the common life of our time. Masons must grapple with international affairs, the public debt and taxes, problems of the war veteran, broken homes, delinquent children, rights of minorities and other issues. Our legacy is indeed a "system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."

Let us individually practice without the Lodge what we profess within its tyled recess.

THE PLAN

Raise the edifice of life upon foundations strong and sure—Put the best into your task and build with things that will endure. With the tools of hope and patience fashion something true and fine—Let no shoddy substance mar the harmony of your design.

Build with bricks that time has mellowed; truths for which great men have died—Use the wisdom of the past and scorn not what is old and tried.

Cornerstones of proven creeds and pillars of philosophy—iron girders of resolve, of virtue and of honesty.

Nigh two thousand years ago there was a young and righteous Man—Who built a Life, then went away and left the world a Master Plan

O that men would use this plan and dare to throw away their own—building not on shifting sands but on the rick of solid stone.

(Patience Strong in *Sunday Pictorial*).

FROM OUR MAIL BAG

We learn from Composite Lodge No. 64, Alexander, that the Worshipful Master, Albert Rabe, initiated his father early last spring. A little later he had the added pleasure of conducting the same ceremony on his brother William and a cousin.

This experience is unique in a small rural lodge.

From Victory Lodge No. 128, intimation was sent us that W.Bro. A. W. Lindsay of Miniota Lodge conferred the Entered Apprentice Degree on his grandson Bro. Blair Lindsay Stewart.

Brother Jenkins of Fort Garry Lodge brings to our attention an inscription on a headstone in St. Andrew's Cemetery, Lockport—which reads—"In Memory of John Ross of Hiram Lodge No. 5. A.F. & A.M. G.R.M. Died July 7th 1888, aged 49 years 7 months.

The postman brought a startling item a few days ago—It is so ridiculous that we considered it worth passing along for amusement purposes only. A letter to the Editor of a Manitoba newspaper asked the question "Why does God allow the devil to haunt a house? The erudite gentleman makes this answer? "It is because the house has been inhabited by Freemasons, Communists or Atheists." We are sometimes linked with strange bed-fellows but for sheer humbug, this, in our opinion takes the proverbial cake.